



Miss Speed = Underwood

Many typewriters are praised for their speed, the [Fox](#), for example. There are others, like the [Blick](#), that *cannot* keep up with an experienced typist. However, since the appearance of modern machines at the beginning of the twentieth century, it is not the typewriter that slows things down, but the typist. For this reason the medals go to the nimble-fingered secretaries, because they can type forty words a minute, net.

Underwood lord and master

Is it a coincidence that there are Underwood medals? No it is not, as that manufacturer dominates in all speed competitions since the turn of the century. Not because the [Underwood 5](#) is quicker than an [L.C. Smith](#) or a [Royal](#), but because the Underwood has the best 'racing stable' of super typists ... and Charles E. Smith; talent scout in secretary schools, coach, ergonomist and ruthless trainer of 'his' typists in the Underwood training hall at Vesey Street 30, New York.

Ten touches a second

During typing competitions, each word is arbitrarily good for five touches. A typist that does 120 words a minute, does 600 theoretical touches a minute. That is ten a second! Stella Willins once typed a repetitive sentence with 264 touches a minute. That is 22 touches a second - as fast as you are now *reading*.

World record

In 1923, Albert Tangora sets the record at 147 words a minute net ... on an Underwood. That means that he really averages a speed of at least 180, because the jury subtracts 10 words for each mistake!

Was it the Underwood or Tangora who scored? Clearly the latter, because he scored his next world record in 1941 ... on a Royal.



By scooping up and putting all the champions in its own team, Underwood wins championship after championship. The message the potential buyer gets is clear: you type faster on an Underwood. And that's final! The Underwood typists carry their bronze, silver or gold medals with due pride.



Ref. The Wonderful Writing Machine (Bruce Bliven Jr., 1954) - Chapter 8: 'Race against the time'

